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# Guidelines for the Establishment of Non-smoking Areas




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# Guidelines for the establishment of non-smoking areas

Should the Ontario Government use legislation to combat cigarette smoking in enclosed public areas? This was one of the questions studied recently by an Ontario Ministry of Health task force on smoking and health.

The task force findings indicated that enforcement of any province-wide legislation against smoking in public areas would prove difficult if not impossible in most circumstances. Nevertheless it did recommend legislation where public co-operation and compliance may be anticipated.

## Self-regulatory approach

As an alternative to legislation now, the task force recommends a self-regulatory approach for most of the areas studied, such as transportation, theatres, eating establishments, health facilities and educational institutions. The transportation and theatre industries have already adopted a degree of self-regulation in their attempts to accommodate both non-smoking and smoking patrons and customers. Other sectors, such as the food-service industry and hospitals, are seeking ways to meet the demand of non-smokers for smoke-free environments.

## Guidelines

In order for a self-regulatory approach to be reasonably effective and consistent on an industry-wide or province-wide basis, guidelines are needed to assist those who want to establish no-smoking policies and procedures.

Consequently, the Ontario Ministry of Health has prepared a series of guidelines for developing no-smoking policies and procedures for specific locations.

## No-smoking areas

The purpose and benefits of promoting and supporting the establishment of no-smoking areas are clear. They are:

1. reduction of air pollution in enclosed spaces — with benefits to health of occupants, particularly those with allergies;
2. reminder and demonstration that smoke pollution is unwelcome to the majority;
3. help to smokers, both in reducing their normal consumption for benefit of their health and in practising self-restraint in specific circumstances;
4. reduction of fire risk and property damage.

While guidelines do not have the same force as legislation, they reflect a desire on the part of government, management and consumers to deal with an important health issue on a voluntary and co-operative basis. This assumes, of course, the acceptance and adoption of such guidelines by those concerned.

The leadership and example of the Ministry and the health professions will be needed to persuade others to adopt and support guidelines. This means interpreting to clients and to the public the necessity and benefits of non-smoking areas.



### **Non-smokers' rights**

Guidelines must also take into account the issue of non-smokers' rights.

Regardless of whose rights are involved, the normal state of one's surrounding air in an enclosed space should approximate the natural environment. This may be done wholly or partially by:

1. separating the enclosed environments so that smoking and the pollutants from it are confined to one area, such as in aircraft, trains and theatres;
  2. providing exhaust and ventilation to remove polluted air from the environment;
  3. limiting the amount or levels of smoking in a given area, such as in offices or conference rooms; and
  4. ruling out smoking entirely within a given area or confining smoking to designated rooms, such as in waiting rooms in hospitals.
3. the capability and willingness of management to alter facilities or operations to create a non-smoking environment;
  4. the readiness of managers and administrators to introduce and to supervise non-smoking policies within their organizations or institutions; and
  5. the degree to which the public co-operates.

### **Will they work?**

Since guidelines are not mandatory, what are the prospects of having them accepted and acted upon in the province? The answer to this question will be determined by:

1. the amount of information and promotion of non-smoking areas provided by government, voluntary and professional health associations and non-smokers' rights groups;
2. public demand for non-smoking areas;

# Developing non-smoking policies and procedures in selected locations

## Hospitals and health facilities

Non-smoking policies (and procedures) in hospitals and health facilities should provide for the well-being and protection of patients and serve as an example to the community.

1. Tobacco smoking should generally not be permitted in patient-care areas of hospitals by patients, staff, volunteers or visitors.
2. Patients who are permitted to smoke while bedridden should be located in rooms or wards to be used for smokers only. Preference for smoking or non-smoking areas should be determined at time of admission.
3. Visitor smoking should be either not permitted at all or confined to designated areas.
4. Staff smoking should be confined to staff rooms.
5. Smoking in hospital cafeterias should be either not permitted at all or confined to a small designated smokers' section.
6. A hospital's policy and rules on smoking should be clearly and regularly interpreted to the patients, staff, visitors and community at large.
7. Hospital staff should provide support and encouragement to patients to discontinue their smoking habits, through personal counselling and smoking cessation groups or clinics.
8. Sale of cigarettes and tobacco products in hospitals should be discouraged.
9. Notwithstanding the above recommendations all hospitals must rigidly enforce the requirements in the Public Hospital Act for the control of smoking by patients where a hazard to their safety is involved.

10. Community health facilities — smoking should not be permitted in waiting or reception areas, nor in consulting and examining rooms of physicians, dentists, or other health care practitioners nor in health units or other community health centres.

## Transportation

Seating arrangements and the limited air spaces relative to passenger loads on most transportation systems preclude satisfactory control of air pollution by mechanical means alone.

There should be some form of smoking restriction or control to protect non-smoking passengers from excessive and indiscriminate smoking on buses, trains and *aircraft* in particular, and, in given circumstances, in automobiles such as taxis.

Non-smoking arrangements currently in effect on most major air and railway systems provide a measure of protection for non-smoking passengers, but these can be improved and extended.

In their present form, they provide an excellent basis for non-smoking guidelines that may be applied to other forms of transport:

1. A clearly designated non-smoking section comprising more than 50 per cent of available seats should be provided on all passenger trains, buses and aircraft, with the exception of urban or municipal bus and commuter services, where smoking should be forbidden entirely.  
All non-smoking passengers who wish to sit in a non-smoking area should be so accommodated even if this requires the designation of additional seating to the non-smoking section.
2. Where passenger areas are not divided by walls or partitions, the seating arrangement should separate smokers from non-smokers by a line across, rather than the length of the aisles, of the bus, train or aircraft.
3. An exhaust system should be operating at all times in all vehicles, trains or aircraft for the removal of cigarette fumes.
4. Smoking in motor vehicles should always be done with adequate ventilation by having windows at least partially opened.
5. Bus drivers should not smoke in the vehicle they are operating.
6. Passengers should be made aware in advance of ticket purchase of smoking restrictions. This would be the responsibility of the air, train or bus line involved and the travel agency arranging bookings.



## **Cinemas, theatres**

While patronage of cinemas and theatres is a matter of choice for most people, the policies on smoking and non-smoking for cinemas and theatres can be expected to reflect consumer demand. This is evident now in the increased number of cinemas and theatres in Ontario with restricted smoking areas. Short of a total ban on smoking in cinemas or theatres, guidelines are intended to extend the provisions for non-smoking to concert halls, playhouses and the like.

1. In cinemas and theatres where intermissions are regularly provided, smoking should be confined to intermissions and restricted to designated or non-smoking areas of the cinema or theatre lobby away from food service areas.
2. Where intermissions are not normally provided, cinemas and theatres should designate a well-marked section for smoking. This section should be of a size and location to provide the least possibility of smoke reaching the non-smokers' area of the cinema or theatre, and to permit the lowest possible level of pollution in the theatre's total air space. In practical terms, this provision would require that a smokers' section should not exceed 25 per cent of the seating capacity of the cinema or theatre.
3. All theatres where smoking is permitted should have an air exchange or air exhaust system to provide an acceptable quality of air in the premises at all times.

4. Patrons should be made aware prior to the purchase of tickets of the management's policy and restrictions on smoking, and should be advised on entering the cinema or theatre of the location of the smoking section.
5. In cinemas, a notice should appear on the screen preceding the film reminding the patrons of the smoking restrictions in the cinema and seeking their co-operation.

## **Sports and recreation complexes**

Because of the great variation in the type and size of facilities used for sports and recreation, both indoor and outdoor, a general approach is needed to establish no-smoking areas so that levels of smoke may not interfere with or be a source of discomfort to participants and spectators. Ideally, smoking should be limited to intermissions and to designated smoking areas in lobbies and away from food areas.

## **Eating establishments**

Although patrons of eating establishments may choose where to eat, their selection of restaurant, lunch counter or cafeteria is often dictated by employment, travel, social and financial considerations.

Whether or not people can always choose where they will eat, once seated for service, in a booth, at a counter or table, patrons have little or no control over the levels of smoke pollution they must experience or tolerate while dining.



So guidelines for the development of smoking restrictions in eating establishments, although difficult to adopt, are badly needed in view of current consumer demand for smoke-free dining areas and the scarcity of such areas in Ontario eating establishments.

1. Non-smokers when seated at lunch counters are unavoidably exposed to the pollution of smokers next to them. Therefore provision should be made for non-smoking sections at all lunch counters or to rule out smoking at lunch counters entirely.
2. Table and booth arrangements should provide a reasonable degree of separation of diners, to prevent direct streaming of smoke from one table or booth to another.
3. Air exchange and exhaust systems should function in such a way as to keep dining areas reasonably free of smoke fumes.
4. All cafeterias and dining rooms should have a section for non-smokers greater than 50 per cent of the total seating capacity. Such non-smoking sections should be clearly marked. All non-smokers should be accommodated in non-smoking sections. Alternatively, restaurant owners could plan together to meet requests of non-smokers for smoke-free dining periods, setting aside times and locations on a rotating basis, or any such arrangement that is mutually advantageous.
5. Restaurant employees should not smoke while on duty or in the food preparation, serving or dining area of the restaurant.

### **Retail food and department stores**

Several municipalities in Ontario have enacted bylaws to forbid smoking in supermarkets. Although some customers ignore the no-smoking signs posted in the supermarkets covered by the bylaw, the majority of customers do observe the signs.

The advantages of this non-smoking bylaw apply both to the shopping public and the supermarkets involved.

1. All retail food outlets in Ontario should establish a non-smoking policy and post no-smoking signs on their premises. Supermarket associations should seek enactment of the appropriate municipal bylaw to forbid smoking in supermarkets to support a no-smoking policy.
2. Other large retail outlets (department stores) should explore the feasibility and advantages of establishing non-smoking policies on their premises. The precedent for this kind of policy has been provided by a number of large retail firms operating in Ontario.

### **Schools, colleges and universities**

Guidelines for the control of smoking in educational institutions are based on the assumption that smoke pollution in classrooms, laboratories and other learning areas within the institution has an adverse effect on students' learning, particularly if they are non-smokers. The effects on students may be either physiological or psychological. Whatever the effect may be, every student should have the opportunity to study under the best conditions available.

Guidelines are proposed to deal almost exclusively with the prevention of smoking in the classroom and other learning areas of the institution, to help students not to begin smoking. They leave to local boards and administrators the rules and observances for smoking in other areas of the institution.

The following guidelines suggest that community colleges, universities and all institutions of higher learning should apply the same no-smoking rules in classrooms that are observed in secondary and public schools in the province.

1. Smoking should not be permitted in any classroom, lecture hall, auditorium, laboratory, library or gymnasium, in public or secondary schools, community colleges, universities or other institutions of higher learning in Ontario.
2. Adequate provisions for non-smoking areas in lounges outside classrooms should be established.

### **Offices, government buildings and other public sites and work areas**

Just as students should have the opportunity to study and to learn under the best conditions, so should workers be able to carry out their job responsibilities in a satisfactory environment. For non-smokers, this would suggest the elimination of cigarette smoke in their immediate surroundings, particularly for those with allergies and respiratory problems. The elimination of cigarette smoke in the work setting also may be critical for both smokers and non-smokers whose work exposes them to industrial pollutants. The solution to this problem differs from work area to work area, from office to office, but guidelines may be a reminder and an incentive to concerned management and employee groups to develop policies and procedures for the control of smoking in work areas.

1. Permit smokers on the job to have short cigarette breaks in a non-work area designated for smoking.
2. Provide non-smokers with an opportunity to work next to other non-smokers, where feasible.
3. Rule out smoking in confined areas, particularly where non-smokers are required to be present, such as elevators.
4. Provide incentives for non-smoking during work.
5. Establish non-smoking regulations among participants at conferences, seminars and meetings.
6. Provide adequate ventilation in all work areas.
7. Encourage and support employees in their efforts to discontinue smoking with cessation clinics and counselling.







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78-4814-1/79-1M